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TruNeighbor Project Uplifts Lansing Neighborhood

(LANSING) – The incredible power of partnerships to improve the quality of life in city neighborhoods was on full display today at 1845 Osband Avenue in Lansing as Mayor Virg Bernero announced an exciting new partnership with TruGreen that is already transforming a derelict, vacant house and overgrown lot into a centerpiece of neighborhood pride.

Mayor Bernero was joined by representatives from TruGreen, the Ingham County Land Bank, Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and other city officials and community leaders to announce the new partnership between the City of Lansing and TruGreen’s TruNeighbor program.

“We at TruGreen take pride in being a ‘TruNeighbor’ to the communities where we live, work and play,” said Craig Raycraft, Michigan region manager for TruGreen. “It’s our hope that by improving the quality of a community’s outdoor spaces we can also improve the quality of life of its residents by helping them to live life outdoors. We are especially grateful to Mayor Virg Bernero for his support in making this happen.”

Thanks to a TruNeighbor grant and in-kind services valued at \$19,800, plus Blight Elimination funds provided by MSHDA, the vacant structure on the Ingham County Land Bank-owned property was recently demolished and the site is now being redeveloped into a dwarf fruit tree orchard, perennial garden and open space for neighbors to gather and children to play.

“I couldn’t be more pleased with our new partnership with TruGreen to enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods through impactful projects like the transformation of this property into a centerpiece of neighborhood pride,” said Mayor Bernero. “Working with TruGreen and our great local and state partners at the Land Bank and MSHDA, and with collaborative input from neighborhood residents, we are breathing new life into neighborhood spaces lot by lot and block by block.”

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Ingham County Land Bank chairperson Eric Schertzing noted that the Land Bank has partnered with Lansing's Department of Planning and Neighborhood Development to leverage \$6 million in federal Blight Elimination funds provided by MSHDA to demolish 250 blighted homes across the city, including the structure at 1845 Osband. More than 100 structures have been torn down thus far, Mr. Schertzing said, which increases adjacent property values, strengthens neighborhood safety and creates unique opportunities for neighbors to participate in defining new uses for the property.

Following demolition of the vacant structure, workers cleared and leveled the overgrown lot and seeded new grass. Dwarf fruit trees and perennials will be planted in the spring when conditions are more favorable for their success.

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